

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
for
June 19, 2008
MEETING NO. 06-08**

APPLICATION: HDC2008-00437

**ADDRESS: 5, 9, 101, 103, 107, 109
N. Adams**

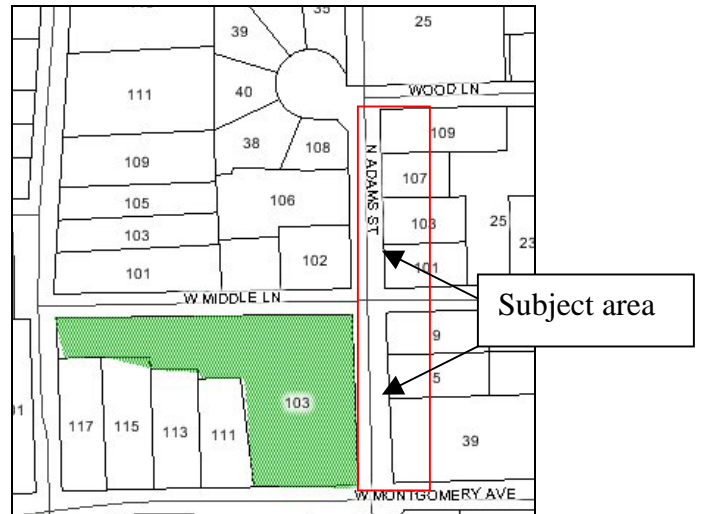
ACCEPTED: May 12, 2008

45 DAY LIMIT: August 4, 2008

OWNER: City of Rockville

**REQUEST: Replace brick sidewalk
with new cement brick
pavers.**

STAFF: Jeffrey Winstel



STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval, given the following findings:

DRAFT MOTION OF APPROVAL:

HDC2008-00437 is consistent with the Secretary of the Interiors' Standards for Historic Rehabilitation No. 5: Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved, and No. 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence,

Motion for approval of HDC2008-00437 with the following conditions:

1. Brick with molded edges is used, similar to those used at the Beall Dawson house, as opposed to cement block that is manufactured to resemble brick.
2. Lay new brick in herringbone pattern in sand. Sidewalks are to be 4' wide with one broad face brick edging laid end to end, as is consistent with City of

Rockville Public Works Department design standards and as described in the *Rockville Town Commissioners Meeting Minutes*, 1892.

3. The edge laid brick in front of 103 N. Adams is considered a historic feature in its own right and will be repaired with existing brick where possible. Existing brick will be flipped and reused if in adequate condition. New brick will match the size and profile of existing brick and will replace failing brick where needed.
4. Replace extension of front walk between sidewalk and street with brick pavers laid in sand in herringbone pattern, if requested by property owners.
5. Respect placement of existing tree trunks and roots to the extent possible, including roots that have formed around existing herringbone brick patterns.

BACKGROUND:

Previous Requests: N/A

Property Area: N/A

Structure Area: N/A

Zone: CT – Commercial Transitional

Development Standards: Development standards for this project are design standards used by the City of Rockville Department of Public Works that require sidewalks to be a minimum of 4' wide. Existing non-conforming driveway widths will not be changed by this project.

City of Rockville Permits Required:
HDC Certificate of Approval

BACKGROUND

Historic, archeological, or architectural value and significance of the site or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area.

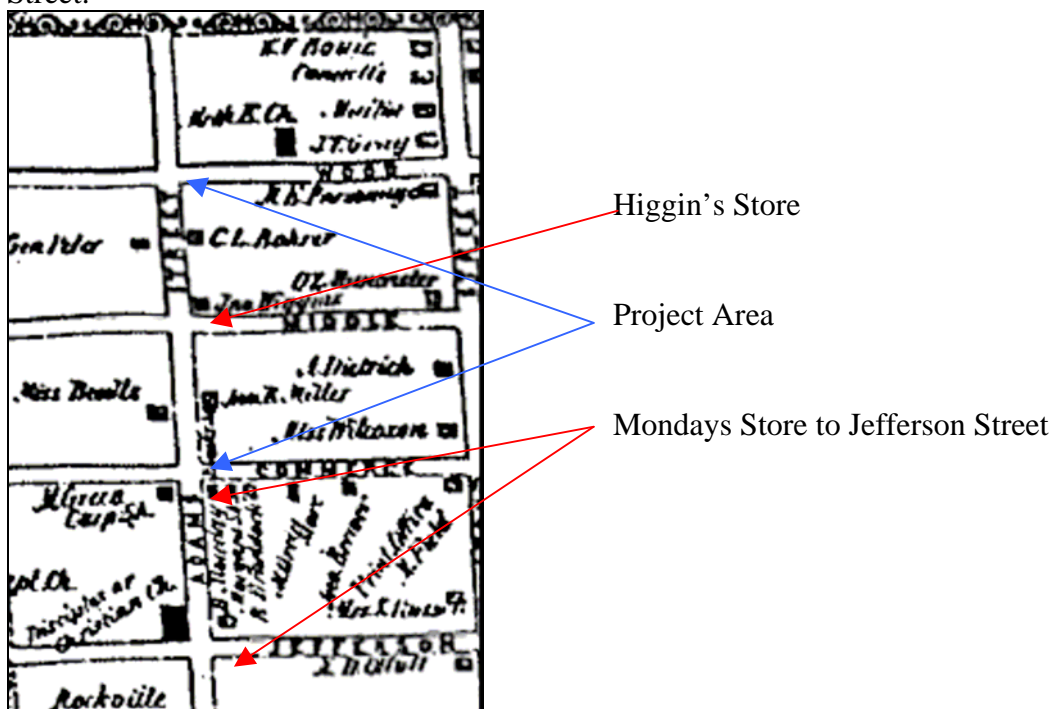
- **Contributing
Non-Contributing**

Significance: The houses along the east side of North Adams Street are located in the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District and are some of the oldest in the city. The Jenkins/Miller/McFarland House at 5 N. Adams and the Robb/Higgins/Ward House at 101 N. Adams were originally constructed in the late 18th century. All but one of the six houses associated with the subject run of sidewalk are contributing resources in the district and identified in the Building Catalog. The non-contributing house is located at 203 North Adams, which was constructed in 1985.

The sidewalk along the east side of N. Adams is predominately brick laid in a herringbone pattern, however one segment is laid in horizontal courses, referred to as edge laid. Some of the sidewalks are dry-laid, with no mortar between the bricks, and some segments are mortared. The edging in some sections consists of two rows of lengthwise bricks, narrow face up, raised approximately an inch above the sidewalk surface. An alternative edging consists of lengthwise bricks flush with the sidewalk surface, broad width facing up. A few of the houses in the area continue the front walk from the door to the street, going beyond the sidewalk. These continuations of the front walk are cement slabs. Although they are not brick, they do reflect a historic circulation pattern and contribute to the environmental setting of the district.

Rockville became incorporated in 1860 and elected Town Commissioners. The *Town Commissioners Meeting Minutes, 1866 – 1896* were consulted for references to sidewalk improvements in the subject area. Although there were no specific references to brick sidewalk construction along N. Adams, the Minutes provide useful contextual information about sidewalks in Rockville during the time period. For the most part, the term pavement is used for sidewalks in the minutes – a usage attributed to Britain and Philadelphia. The location of these pavement projects is identified by street and the location of particular person's house or business.

In 1866 an Otto [sic] Muncaster was paid \$87.83 for “making sidewalks”. Mr. Muncaster was paid in 1867 for “Street repairs Washington Street, Wood Lane, Middle Lane and other streets of the town, ...Adams Street from Monday's shop to Jefferson Street.”



1865 Map of Montgomery County, Maryland, Plan of Rockville, Martinet and Bond's.

More information on the character of the sidewalks is revealed in the June 24, 1867 minutes. The Commissioners “Ordered that before any permanent improvement be made to any street or land in this town that the President of the Board be required to employ a competent surveyor and grade of such streets and that all such lanes shall have a sidewalk of four feet on each side.”

The sidewalks referenced in the above motion were not necessarily brick. The April 21, 1869 minutes contains the following appropriation: “ordered that the sum of seventy five (\$75.00) be used the same is hereby appropriated to laying down a sidewalk of two planks from Mr. Higgins store to residences of R.M. Williams and to repairing the road in street at the same.” The residences of R.M. Williams are not identified on the 1860 map or the 1878 Hopkins Map. This is the only reference to the Higgins Store in motions for sidewalk construction.

The entry for July 2, 1888 provides specific information on how sidewalks were constructed.

On motion it is ordered that a pavement be laid along the north side of Commerce Street beginning at the intersection of the front line of Miffs. Margaret J. Beall’s land with that of Mr. R. H. Stoker thence westerly to the western limits of Res. Dr. Sinefson’s [sic] lot with the understanding that said pavement shall be eight feet side wide the outer five feet thereof to be of brick and the inner three feet of clay, that said clay and brick pavement shall have sufficient slope towards street for drainage. That outside curbing shall consist of bricks set lengthwise end upward in the earth about one inch below the surface of the pavement and inside curbing shall be of brick laid sideways and on a grade with the surface. That none but first class paving brick shall be used said bricks to be purchased at James H. Richards. The paving shall be herringbone style and conform to curves of pavement on the opposite side of the Streets on a grade to be six inches deep. The sand shall be first class sand and no sand shall be used or dumped unless first inspected by the Supervisor or approved by the Council.

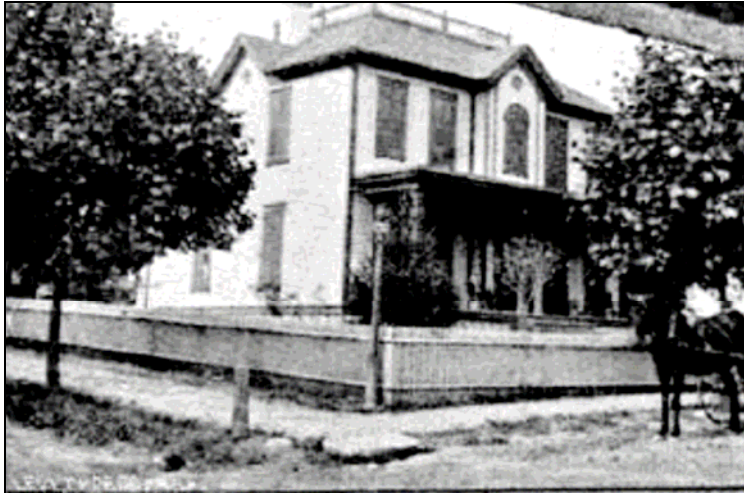


Detail of N. Adams sidewalk edge. Although buckling and failing sub structure is evident, the two rows of edge brick appear to have been laid edge side up.



The existing sidewalk in front of the Beall Dawson House differs from the description in the minutes, but is laid in the Herringbone pattern.

Sidewalk along north side of West Montgomery,
formerly Commerce Lane



Historic Photographs rarely show details of sidewalks, but the difference in the elevation of the sidewalk from the street level is apparent. Other streetscape elements, such as trees, fencing, street lamp and stepping stone are also evident.

Anderson House, corner of North Adams and Montgomery
c. 1890 "Peerless Rockville" publication, Henry N. Coop

In 1892, carpenter-builder Edwin M. West was elected a Town Commissioner. Mr. West provided specific instructions when making a motion to appropriate funds for sidewalk construction. In July of 1892 he instructed that sidewalks for Forest and Wood streets be "4' wide, laid in 6' of good sharp sand curbing seasoned white oak 2x10" and one brick set edgewise on each side of framework -- ... to be laid herringbone style and all driveways to be laid edge ways."

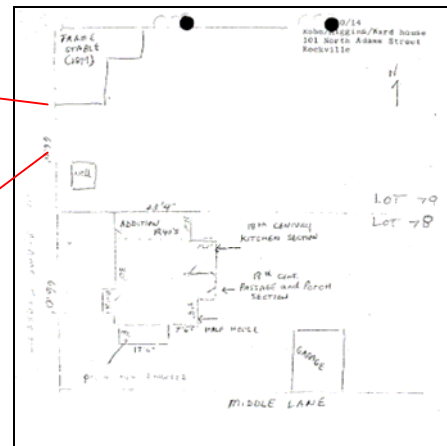
The herringbone style is used in the subject stretch of sidewalk on the east side of N. Adams, but the driveways are blacktop or recent herringbone brick. The stretch of sidewalk fronting 103 N. Adams is, however, laid edge ways, immediately beyond the well on the 101 N. Adams Street property.

The MHT inventory form for the Robb /Higgins/Ward House at 101 N. Adams provides a reference to the current sidewalk. John Higgins died in 1870 and the appraisal of the Adams Street property notes “A frame dwelling, very much out of repair, on one acre of land...with one stable, one carriage house, one meat house, and one wood and corn house.... garden and fence in good condition.”¹ The MHT form also states that the stable “lay north of the house, on lot 79. This site is now under construction for the building of a new office building, but the brick apron of the driveway from N. Adams Street to the stable area is extant”.

The existing blacktop driveway between 103 and 107 N. Adams is actually on Lot 80, not Lot 79. Although the hand-drawn map below is not to scale and does not depict sidewalks or driveways, it does suggest that the brick apron of the driveway could be the existing portion of the sidewalk that is edge laid.



Edgeways side walk in front of 103 N. Adams



Historic Site Plan, Robb/ Higgins/
Ward House, 101 N. Adams
MHT 26/10/14

A reference to sidewalk improvements to Adams Street appears in the November 18, 1892 minutes: “On motion it was ordered that a board walk be laid on the West side of Adams Street from Commerce Street (Montgomery Avenue) to Jefferson Street.” The only 19th century town commissioner minutes reference to sidewalk improvements in the subject area is for plank sidewalks.

The Town Commissioners’ Minutes from 1892 to 1896 mention sidewalk construction and street improvements infrequently -- a possible reflection of the economic Depression of 1893. In addition, by this time concrete was gaining in popularity as a paving product. The first concrete street was poured in Bellfontaine, Ohio in 1891 and concrete soon got a reputation for being less expensive and easier to install than brick pavers.

¹ Higgins Estate – Inventory at RWC 38 et seq. Order of February 27, 1871. p. 247. from MHT 26/10/14 Robb/Higgins/Ward house.

VIEWS OF AFFECTED RESOURCE:
Streetscape façades along N. Adams, north to south



109 N. Adams



107 N. Adams



103 N. Adams



101 N. Adams



9 N. Adams



5 N. Adams



Driveway between 5 N. Adams and
39 West Montgomery



39 West Montgomery, west elevation
looking southeast



Length of sidewalk, aerial photograph 2006

EXISTING SIDEWALK CONDITIONS

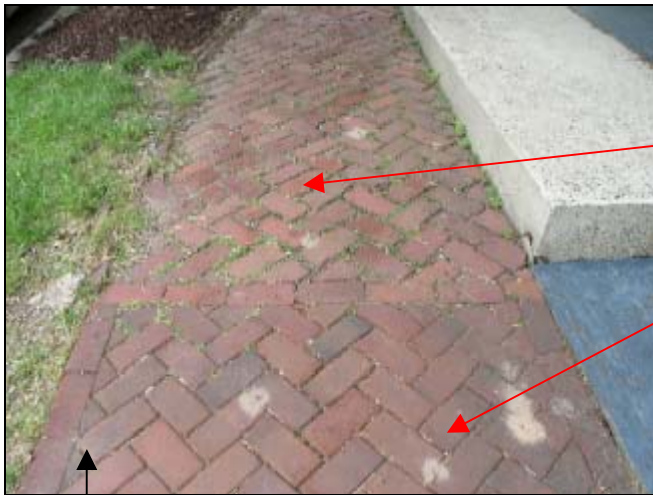


Recently laid brick sidewalks

Brick laid without mortar

Brick laid with mortar

5 North Adams
North



Older (30 years plus) brick sidewalk

Recently laid brick sidewalk without
mortar

5 North Adams
North



5 North Adams



Extension of front walk between sidewalk and street

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT:

The Impact of the proposed landscaping and changes to environmental setting on the existing historic character of the district.

The project consists of repairing/replacing existing brick sidewalk along the east side of North Adams Street with new bricks. The pavers will be set in a herringbone pattern and set in sand. The edges will be laid lengthwise (end to end) and will be flush with the herringbone walk surface.

A previous brick sidewalk project at the adjacent Beall Dawson House property recommended “the removal of the existing brick walkway and replace with a more appropriate molded brick in place of the machine cut modern brick currently in place.”²



Beall Dawson sidewalk and Middle Lane
Brick has molded edges.

The City of Annapolis, Maryland has a policy of replacing its historic brick sidewalks with in-kind material only (no cement faux bricks). They use photo documentation and specifications if available.³

MATERIALS:

The general compatibility of exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.

New brick similar to that used at the Beall Dawson House walkways will be compatible with the design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture of the West Montgomery Avenue District’s historic character and built environment.

COMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES:

The City of Rockville Technical Guidelines do not discuss walkways or sidewalks.

Attachments:

Memorandum, Scope of Work for North Adams Street brick sidewalk reconstruction
To: Jeff Winstel, From: Mike Wilhelm., Chief, Contract Management Division
Email correspondence, Mike Wilhelm, Jeff Winstel, 6/11/2008.

² Historic Landscape Study and Master Plan: Beall Dawson House, Stephenson & Good, Landscape Architects, April 1, 1994, amended 1998.

³ Email from Donna Hole (former chief Preservation Officer, city of Annapolis, to Jeff Winstel, 6/11/2008.

